

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-36. (Canceled)

37. (Previously Presented) A shared voice processing system for use with private telephone switches, the system comprising a central voice processing unit connected via at least one central office with a plurality of PBXs. *Fig. 1A* *49*

38. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing system according to claim 37 and also further comprising a voice processing interface associated with at least one PBX, said voice processing interface communicating with said voice processing unit via said at least one central office.

39. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing system according to claim 38, and wherein said voice processing interface is located intermediate a PBX and a telephone line communicating with said central office and via said central office with said central voice processing unit.

40. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing system according to ~~either of~~ claim 38, and wherein said interface provides translation of signaling between a signaling protocol employed by the PBX and a signaling protocol employed by the central voice processing unit.

41. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing system according to claim 37, and wherein said at least one central office provides multiplexed connections to said plurality of PBXs.

42. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing system according to claim 38, and wherein said interface is connected to a PBX via a PBX extension.

43. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing system according to claim 42, and wherein said interface is also connected to said PBX via a digital data link.

44. (Previously Presented) A shared voice processing system for use with private telephone switches, the system comprising:

a central voice processing unit connected with a plurality of PBXs; and

a voice processing interface associated with at least one PBX and being connected intermediate a PBX and a telephone line communicating with said central voice processing unit.

45. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing system according to claim 44, and wherein said interface provides translation of signaling between a signaling protocol employed by the PBX and a signaling protocol employed by the central voice processing unit.

46. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing system according to claim 44, and wherein at least one central office provides multiplexed connections between said central voice processing unit and said plurality of PBXs.

47. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing system according to claim 44, and wherein said interface is connected to a PBX via a PBX extension.

48. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing system according to claim 47, and wherein said interface is also connected to said PBX via a digital data link.

49. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing system according to claim 38, and wherein said interface is incorporated in a PBX.

50. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing system according to claim 37, and also further comprising at least one computer system cooperating with at least one of said PBXs for providing unified messaging.

51. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing system according to claim 44, and also further comprising at least one computer system cooperating with at least one of said PBXs for providing unified messaging.

52. (Canceled)

53. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing system according to claim 44, and wherein at least one of said plurality of PBXs and at least one of said plurality of interfaces, which is connected to said at least one of said plurality of PBXs, are connected to separate central offices.

54. (Currently Amended) A telephone network having a shared voice processing capability, comprising:

a plurality of PBXs; and

a central voice processing unit connected via at least one central office with said plurality of PBXs.

55. (Currently Amended) A telephone network having a shared voice processing capability according to claim 54, and also further comprising a voice processing interface associated with at least one PBX, said voice processing interface communicating with said voice processing unit via said at least one central office.

56. (Currently Amended) A telephone network having a shared voice processing capability according to claim 55, and wherein said voice processing interface is located intermediate a PBX and a telephone line communicating with said central office and via said central office with said central voice processing unit.

57. (Currently Amended) A telephone network having a shared voice processing capability according to claim 55, and 54 and wherein said interface provides translation of signaling between a signaling protocol employed by the PBX and a signaling protocol employed by the central voice processing unit.

58. (Currently Amended) A telephone network having a shared voice processing capability according to claim 54, and wherein said at least one central office provides multiplexed connections to said plurality of PBXs.

59. (Currently Amended) A telephone network having a shared voice processing capability according to claim 55, and wherein said interface is connected to a PBX via a PBX extension.

60. (Currently Amended) A telephone network having a shared voice processing capability according to claim 59, and wherein said interface is also connected to said PBX via a digital data link.

61. (Previously Presented) A telephone network having a shared voice processing capability comprising:

a central voice processing unit connected with a plurality of PBXs; and

a voice processing interface associated with at least one PBX and being connected intermediate a PBX and a telephone line communicating with said central voice processing unit.

62. (Currently Amended) A telephone network having a shared voice processing capability according to claim 61, and wherein said interface provides translation of signaling between a signaling protocol employed by the PBX and a signaling protocol employed by the central voice processing unit.

63. (Currently Amended) A telephone network having a shared voice processing capability according to claim 61, and wherein at least one central office provides multiplexed connections between said central voice processing unit and said plurality of PBXs.

64. (Currently Amended) A telephone network having a shared voice processing capability according to claim 61, and wherein said interface is connected to a PBX via a PBX extension.

65. (Currently Amended) A telephone network having a shared voice processing capability according to claim 64, and wherein said interface is also connected to said PBX via a digital data link.

66. (Currently Amended) A telephone network having a shared voice processing capability according to claim 55, and wherein interface is incorporated in a PBX.

67. (Currently Amended) A telephone network having a shared voice processing capability according to claim 54, and also further comprising at least one computer cooperating with at least one of said PBXs for providing unified messaging.

68. (Currently Amended) A telephone network having a shared voice processing capability according to claim 61, and also further comprising at least one computer cooperating with at least one of said PBXs for providing unified messaging.

69. (Canceled)

70. (Currently Amended) A telephone network having a shared voice processing capability according to claim 61, and wherein at least one of said plurality of PBXs and at least one of said plurality of interfaces, which is connected to said at least one of said plurality of PBXs, are connected to separate central offices.

71. (Previously Presented) A shared voice processing method for use with private telephone switches, the method comprising connecting a central voice processing unit via at least one central office with a plurality of PBXs.

72. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing method according to claim 71, and also further comprising associating a voice processing interface with at least one PBX, said voice processing interface communicating with said voice processing unit via said at least one central office.

73. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing method according to claim 72, and wherein said voice processing interface is located intermediate a PBX and a

telephone line communicating with said central office and via said central office with said central voice processing unit.

74. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing method according to claim 72, and wherein said interface provides translation of signaling between a signaling protocol employed by the PBX and a signaling protocol employed by the central voice processing unit.

75. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing method according to claim 71, and wherein said at least one central office provides multiplexed connections to said plurality of PBXs.

76. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing method according to claim 72, and wherein said interface is connected to a PBX via a PBX extension.

77. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing method according to claim 76, and wherein said interface is also connected to said PBX via a digital data link.

78. (Previously Presented) A shared voice processing method for use with private telephone switches, the method comprising:

connecting a central voice processing unit with a plurality of PBXs; and
style="padding-left: 40px;">connecting a voice processing interface intermediate a PBX and a telephone line communicating with said central voice processing unit.

79. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing method according to claim 78, and wherein said interface provides translation of signaling between a signaling protocol employed by the PBX and a signaling protocol employed by the central voice processing unit.

80. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing method according to claim 78, and wherein at least one central office provides multiplexed connections between said central voice processing unit and said plurality of PBXs.

81. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing method according to claim 78, and wherein said interface is connected to a PBX via a PBX extension.

82. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing method according to claim 81, and wherein said interface is also connected to said PBX via a digital data link.

83. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing method according to claim 72, and wherein said interface is incorporated in a PBX.

84. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing method according to claim 71, and also further comprising at least one computer method cooperating with at least one of said PBXs for providing unified messaging.

85. (Currently Amended) A shared voice processing method according to claim 78 and also further comprising at least one computer method cooperating with at least one of said PBXs for providing unified messaging.

86. (Canceled)

87. (Previously Presented) A shared voice processing method according to claim 78, and wherein at least one of said plurality of PBXs and at least one of said plurality of interfaces, which is connected to said at least one of said plurality of PBXs, are connected to separate central offices.